

## 5

A third system data stream 38 determines the "ownership" of the resources of the display and the keyboard. This ownership is determined when the switch message is received. However, both the interactive ad and the main game task continue to be received and messages and events are processed regardless of the ownership of the screen and keyboard. This allows the "background" application to continue running, even when the other application has an ownership of the screen and keyboard resources. Moreover, this control is available to the central computer system and the producer unlike a "windows" type program which is under the control of the specific user.

The resulting benefit of the foregoing allows the interactive advertisement to be flexible enough to accurately and effectively target customers. In addition, immediate purchase of the item can be provided.

What is claimed is:

1. A game of skill or chance played simultaneously by several participants remote from each other in conjunction with at least one common game where interactive advertising is inserted into the game comprising:

communication means for providing to each participant said common game along with said interactive advertising;

control unit means associated with each remote participant for receiving game and interactive ad inputs by such participant said control unit means including keyboard means and a visual display said control unit means including a game data stream and an interactive ad data stream which may be selectively associated with said keyboard means and visual display;

## 6

central computer system means for transmitting and downloading game messages and interactive ad messages to all of said control unit means and for receiving uploaded game data and interactive ad data from said control unit means which are related to said inputs, said control unit means continuing to process both said interactive ad and game messages on said respective data streams irrespective of which data stream said keyboard means and said display are associated with; said central computer system means also including means for transmitting an additional switching message for transmission and downloading to said control unit means, said control unit means including a third switching message data stream means for receiving said switching message and in response to such message associating said keyboard means and visual display with a selected game data stream or interactive ad data stream in accordance with said message, the unselected data stream continuing to process in the background.

2. A game of skill or chance as in claim 1 where said central control system means and said control unit means include means for downloading to said game control unit means interactive advertising programs before said game starts.

3. A game of skill or chance as in claim 1 where said communication means includes a common channel means for downloading both said game and interactive ad messages.

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